

Message Text

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USS LAWRENCE

AMCONSUL NICE

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SUBJECT: MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES

1. SUMMARY:

THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY AT DRAGUIGNAN THIS YEAR AND THE HEAVY SCHEDULE OF SUBSIDIARY FUNCTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT IN A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL MANNER. THIS PRODUCED A BROAD AND UNIFORMLY FAVORABLE PUBLIC IMAGE FOR THE UNITED STATES. THE SUCCESS WAS DUE ENTIRELY TO THE FINE PERFORMANCE OF THE MANY PARTICIPATING GROUPS WHICH DID AN OUTSTANDING GOOD PIECE OF WORK NOT MERELY WITH RESPECT TO THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES BUT IN COORDINATING THEIR EFFORTS AMONG ONE ANOTHER. IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT A SIMILARY HIGH MARK CAN BE ACHIEVED NEXT YEAR.

2. THE MEMORIAL CEREMONY AT THE US MILITARY CEMETERY, DRAGUIGNAN ON MAY 28 WAS WELL PLANNED AND CONDUCTED BY THE CEMETERY'S SUPERINTENDENT, JOHN BRUNEA WORKING IN CONCERT WITH VICE COMMANDER STEPHEN BROWN (MAJOR, USA,RET) OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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AMERICAN LEGION POST AT NICE. DURING THE CEREMONY ITSELF US NAVY ELEMENTS HAD A KEY ROLE. COMMODORE CHARLES F. HORNE, III, COMMANDER DESTROYER SQUADRON 22, REPRESENTING THE COMMANDER OF THE SIXTH FLEET, GAVE THE MAIN ADDRESS IN FRENCH WHICH WAS VERY WELL RECEIVED. HIS FLAGSHIP, THE USS LAWRENCE, PROVIDED A CHAPLAIN, A FIRING DETAIL, AND A COLOR GUARD, ALL OF WHOM CARRIED OUT THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES

PERFECTLY. AMONG THE MANY OTHER PARTICIPANTS AT THE CEREMONY, RALPH MEIMA, THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER, CONGEN MARSEILLE PRESENTED A SPEECH AND PLACED A WREATH. PRINCIPAL LOCAL FIGURES WHO TOOK PART IN THE CEREMONY WERE VAR SOUS PREFET SEVELLEC REPRESENTING THE PREFET OF THE VAR - DR. GAYRAUD, CONSEILLER GENERAL REPRESENTING THE SENATEUR-MAIRE OF DRAGUIGNAN - M. HAUTECOEUR, DEPUTE OF THE VAR, GENERAL PONS, COMMANDANT OF THE ARMY ARTILLERY SCHOOL, DRAGUIGNAN, RALPH ELDRIDGE, COMMANDER OF AMERICAN LEGION RIVIERA POST NO. 1, NICE, AND MME VIGIER, PRESIDENT OF SOUVENIR FRANCO-AMERICAN OF THE VAR.

3. AS USUAL, THE ORGANIZATION " SOUVENIR FRANCO-AMERICAIN" OF THE VAR OCCUPIED A VITAL PLACE IN THE MEMORILA DAY EFFORT. IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LEGION, THIS YEAR AS EVERY YEAR SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1967, THE SOUVENIR FRANCO-AMERICAN BROUGHT AS GUESTS TO THE CEREMONY TWO AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO ARE RELATED TO ONE OF THE FALLEN IN THE CEMETERY, IN THIS CASE MR. AND MRS. LOUIS FELDMAN OF VERONA, NEW JERSEY, MRS. FELDMAN BEING THE SISTER OF BERNARD KRIEGEL WHO DIED IN COMBAT NEAR DRAGUIGNAN ON AUGUST 19, 1944. THE FELDMANS ARRIVED AT MARSEILLE AIRPORT ON MAY 25 WHERE THEY WERE WELCOMED BY CONSUL GENERAL MEIMA, MME VIGIER, AND A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE SOUVENIR FRANCO-AMERICAIN OF THE VAR. DURING AN AIRPORT RECEPTION WHICH FOLLOWED, ORGANIZED BY THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL , MEMBERS OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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LOCAL PRESS MET THE FELDMANS AND SOUVENIR FRANCO-AMERICAIN LEADERS. DURING THE FOLLOWING TWO WEEKS THE FELDMANS ENJOYED AN EVENT-FILLED PROGRAM IN THE VAR AND COTE D'AZUR REGIONS AS GUESTS OF SOUVENIR FRANCO-AMERICAIN.

4. ON JUNE 2, CONSUL GENERAL MEIMA ACCOMPANIED COMMODORE HORNE AND THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE USS LAWRENCE ON OFFICIAL CALLS UPON MAYOR LAURIN (RPR) OF ST. RAPHAEL, WHERE THE USS LAWRENCE WAS ANCHORED , AND DEPUTE-MAYOR LEOTARD (PR) OF FREJUS. IN BOTH INSTANCES THE MAYORS WERE MOST CORDIAL IN THEIR WELCOME AND FOLLOWED THE WELCOME CEREMONY WITH A BRIEF, WARM RECEPTION WHICH INCLUDED SENIOR MUNICIPAL COUNSELLORS AND RANKING LOCAL FIGURES.

AFTER THE OFFICIAL VISITS COMMODORE HORNE HOSTED A VERY PLEASANT LUNCHEON ON BOARD THE USS LAWRENCE WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY SOUS-PREFET SEVELLEC, MAYORS LAURIN AND LEOTARD, COMMANDER ELDRIDGE, GENERAL PONS, MME VIGIER, COMMANDANT DEBAECKER AS THE SENIOR OFFICER OF FREJUS-ST. RAPHAEL NAVAL AIR STATION, VICE COMMANDER BROWN, CONSUL GENERAL MEIMA, AND SIX OTHER GUESTS.

5. THE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE FOREGOING ACTIVITIES WAS FREQUENT, OF GOOD QUALITY, AND UNIFORMLY VERY POSITIVE FOR THE UNITED STATES AND ITS OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES. THE MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY AT DRAGUIGNAN WAS WELL ATTENDED BY AN AUDIENCE OF SOME 550 PERSONS. COPIES OF PRESS CLIPPINGS WILL BE DISPATCHED BY MAIL TO ADDRESSEES. THE ENTIRE EFFORT GREATLY BENEFITTED FROM THE EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE OF THIS POST'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS UNIT WHICH WORKED TIRELESSLY TO SCHEDULE AND COORDINATE IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE PROGRAM, DRAFT SPEECHES, AND FURNISH SIMILAR VITAL SUPPORT. MEIMA

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